ABSTRACT

A communications system has stations arranged in clusters (1a, 1b and 1c) of communication member stations (CM2, CM3, CM6 and CM7), with one member station (CH1, CH4 or CH5) in each cluster being a head station for the cluster. Each member station (CM2, CM3, CM6 and CM7) communicates with the network through a cluster head station (CH1, CH4 or CH5). The cluster head stations (CH1, CH4 and CH5) communicate among other cluster head stations (CH1, CH4 and CH5). A mobile communications station (e.g., CM3) evaluates a beacon message received from a first member station (e.g., CM6) of the plurality of mobile stations through a transceiver 6. The station CM3 also determines whether to communicate with the first member station CM6 directly or to communicate with the first member station CM6 by forwarding messages through a cluster head station CH1 that is affiliated to the mobile communications station CM3.